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LONDON AND PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHERS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SU](#) [ER](#)

SUBJECT: ISAIAS URGES SUDAN TO LOOK BEYOND ICC INDICTMENT

REF: A. ASMARA 14

[1](#)B. ASMARA 2

Classified By: Ambassador Ronald K. McMullen for reason 1.4(d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: A small SPLM delegation headed by Sudanese Foreign Minister Deng Alor met with President Isaias Afwerki February 28, largely to address the president's recent anti-GOSS remarks. Isaias reportedly told Alor to focus on the long-term, decide what it wants, and develop a strategy to get it. Alor's visit was soon followed by a Government of Sudan (GOS) delegation headed by Sudanese Presidential Assistant Dr. Nafie Ali Nafie. The purpose of the latter visit was to secure Eritrean support to fight the pending ICC indictment. A close source indicates that while Eritrean media reported unwavering Eritrean support for Sudan, President Isaias actually chastised both the SPLM and the NCP as too focused on short-term issues. End Summary.

ALOR CHIDES ISAIAS... AND VICE VERSA

[1](#)2. (C) During President Isaias' January 10th interview with Eritrean media, he accused the Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) of "squandering" six billion dollars received as a result of the Naivasha Agreement. According to the GOSS mission in Eritrea, the delegation told Isaias "there is no need to accuse one's neighbors of misdeeds," and subtly reminded Isaias that Eritrea's oil imports are drilled in southern Sudan. Alor also raised the issue of the 110 SPLA troops stranded in Tessenei, near the Sudan border (Ref A).

[1](#)3. (C) According to a close source, President Isaias assured Minister Deng Alor that Eritrea would support the GOSS whether it decided to remain part of Sudan or if it decided to form its own country. The president emphasized, however, that the GOSS should have a proactive vision of what it wants, rather than simply react to the actions of the GOS. Without a strong vision of the country's future, he continued, the GOSS is likely to end up no better than the GOS. He additionally mentioned that the ICC indictment should not be the focus of the GOSS plan of action. The focus should instead be on what the GOSS wants to accomplish in the long term, rather than what is the crisis of the moment.

BATTLING THE ICC

[1](#)4. (C) Dr. Nafie Ali Nafie, GOS presidential assistant, met with President Isaias March 3 to elicit Eritrean support

against the looming ICC announcement. The GSE official website quotes President Isaias saying Eritrea does not accept the indictment and will "stand alongside the Sudanese people." News coverage of the GOS visit also reported the two governments agreed to launch programs in development and economic cooperation, and strengthen bilateral ties.

¶5. (C) What actually transpired at the meeting was nothing like the results reported in the press, according to our source. President Isaias reportedly agreed with the delegation that the ICC indictment should not dictate Sudan's future, but did not agree to condemn the indictment. Additionally, the president advised the delegation that the GOS should use this opportunity to form a plan of action, advising the NCP to hold true to its stated goals of working with other political entities.

¶6. (C) COMMENT: President Isaias has a history of "tough love" with the Sudanese government in one on one meetings (reftel B). At the same time, the Khartoum government is Eritrea's largest trading partner. As a result, the Eritrean media will only report on developments that openly promote the Eritrean-Sudanese relationship.
MCMULLEN